

Story 1492 (1976 Tape 19)

Narrator: Müslim Öğretmen
/actual name; he is
not a teacher/

Location: Yukarıgöklü village,
Halfeti kaza,
Urfa Province

Date: May 19, 1976

The Padishah's Son and the Fox

Once there was and once there wasn't, in the old times when Allah's people were many, there was a padishah who did not have a son. One day while he was walking in the garden of his palace with his grand vizier, this padishah saw a dervish approaching. "Tell me, my vizier," said the padishah, "do you suppose that that dervish knows who we are?"

At that very moment, before the vizier could answer, dervish said, "Of course I do! You are the padishah, and your companion is the grand vizier."

Confused, the padishah asked, "Then do you also know what my great problem is?"

"Yes. I know that Allah has not so far sent you any offspring. But here is something that will help you with that problem. Take this apple home. Peel it first. Then eat half of the apple and give the other half to your wife. After you have eaten the apple, give the peelings to your mare. I shall pray that Allah will give you a son as handsome and as healthy as any boy could possibly be." Having said that, the dervish

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suddenly vanished.

The padishah returned to the palace and did exactly as he had been directed. He peeled the apple, ate half of it and gave his wife the other half to eat. Then he went to the stable and fed the apple peelings to his mare. With the permission of Allah, his wife became pregnant, and after nine months had passed, she gave birth to a baby boy. They named the boy Shah Mohammed.

With the passage of time the boy grew up, and he finally reached a marriageable age. Although the padishah did not object to his son's marrying, he did not approve of any of the girls who were candidates for the role of bride. This upset Shah Mohammed very much, and after giving the matter some thought, he decided to leave his father's palace. After filling the saddlebags of his horse with gold, he took his rifle mounted his horse, and departed

Shah Mohammed went little, he went far, and by the time the sun had set, he had arrived in mountainous country. Covering himself with his fur coat, he lay down beneath a tree and fell asleep. The following morning when he woke up, he saw a fox staring at him. He said to the fox, "I am very hungry. I shall go and find food somewhere or hunt some game. You do the same thing for me." At the end of the day the son of the padishah returned with three animals he had shot. When the fox returned to

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the same place, he brought a wolf with him. The three of them shared the game that Shah Mohammed had killed

On the following day, the young man went hunting again, and the fox and the wolf also went in quest of animals. As fortune would have it, the prince killed four animals that day. When he returned with them, he found that the fox and the wolf had brought back a tiger. The four of them shared the game that he had killed that day. This went on day after day, and soon the son of the padishah had a whole army of wild animals, but all of them remained under the command of the fox

These animal soldiers went into cities, towns, and villages and plundered the inhabitants. It was not long before this activity had made Shah Mohammed a very rich man. He was able to buy large herds, and in his camp stood many tents.

One day the fox spent an hour or two thinking about something. Then he gathered all of the other animals and told them what was on his mind. He said, "The son of the padishah has many good things. He is wealthy and he is handsome, but he lacks one important thing, and that is a wife. We must find a suitable wife for him." After talking about this among themselves for a short while, the animals decided to get as bride for the prince the daughter of Reşit Effendi,¹ a girl who had

¹A mild honorific, comparable to Sir, it usually follows a first name: Hasan Effendi. At one time it was used to show respect to distinguished people, but it has become so devaluated in the twentieth century that it now is used only for servants and children.

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never seen the sunlight even once in all her life.

After making this decision, the animals then discussed the difficulty they would have in getting this girl. How could they possibly get a girl who never went outside her father's home? Finally the fox arrived at a solution to this problem, and he ordered several of the wild creatures to undertake the abduction of the girl. He said, "Let Brother Wolf, Brother Tiger, and Brother Bear go to the field in front of Reşit Effendi's mansion and act as if they are plowing. This will be so amusing to all Reşit Effendi's household that they will all go to the edge of the field to watch you. In doing so, they will leave the girl alone in the mansion. Right then, two very pretty pigeons should fly into the mansion and attract the attention of the girl. She will wish to catch you, but you should fly just ahead of her and, as you do so, lead her out the door and into the open where we can seize her.

The animals who were assigned to this work did just what the fox had ordered them to do. The plowing by the three large animals caused great excitement among the household of Reşit Effendi, and everyone except the girl went out to watch them. The two pigeons lured the girl out through the mansion door as she tried to catch them in her hands. As soon as she was outside, the other animals surrounded her and took her to the mountainous country to the tent of Shah Mohammed.

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After a wedding celebration that lasted for forty days and forty nights, Shah Mohammed and the daughter of Reşit Effendi were married. Time passed, and it seemed that the son of the padishah now had everything that anyone could want. One day, however, the fox came upon the prince when he was lost in deep thought. "What are you thinking about so deeply?" asked the fox

The son of the padishah answered, "Look at me! It would seem that I have everything, but I am unable to talk with my father or even see him. I miss him very much. With your permission, I should like to visit my father." Of course, unless the fox gave permission for such a visit, the young man would not be able to undertake it, but the fox did agree to comply with this request. He at once ordered that two camels be made ready for the journey. The fox rode on one of the camels, and Shah Mohammed and his wife rode on the other.

When they got close to the padishah's country, the fox stopped everyone. There was a farmer plowing in his field where they halted, and the fox called this man to him. He said, "Oh, farmer, I shall give you two gold coins if you will go to your padishah and tell him that his son has arrived and wishes to see him. But I do not want any kind of welcoming ceremony, and I do not want to hear a great amount of noise upon our

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arrival. Let there be no barking of dogs, for I am very sensitive to such loud noises."

farmer went to the palace where he said, "O my padishah, your long-lost son has returned. He is now married, and he is very rich. He is accompanied by a large army, but his soldiers are quite different from our soldiers. The fox who commands them does not wish to have any kind of welcoming ceremony or any kind of noise to mark their arrival." The padishah and all of the villagers did exactly as the fox had requested.

Meanwhile, the fox said to his animal troops, "Oh, friends, we shall rest for a while in this village. The people here will give you some food, and you will be comfortable here, but when I give the command to get ready, you are to do so at once. The animals then went to a hilly area on the edge of the village to rest, and the padishah's son and his wife went to the room in the palace that had been prepared for them. Later the padishah and his son embraced and kissed each other. Shah Mohammed told his father everything that had happened to him. He then said, "This is Brother Fox, and it was he who did everything necessary to bring me to the level of life I now enjoy."

passed, and they remained in that village longer than they had supposed they would. After a while the padishah

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died, and his son succeeded him. One day shortly after Shah Mohammed became padishah, the fox became concerned about something. He thought, "I have done so many favors for the man who is now padishah. I know that he always shows me great respect, but I wonder if he really feels that way about me. Does he show me that respect willingly? I want to test his loyalty."

One night the fox defecated in his beautiful silk bed. When his bed was thoroughly filthy, he lay down in it as if he were dead. The following morning, Shah Mohammed was worried when the fox did not appear. The new padishah sent a maid to the fox's room to see if he was all right. When the maid saw the filthy condition of the room and the apparently dead body of the fox, she reported these things to the padishah. He went to the fox's room to see the situation for himself, but he said nothing. When his wife arrived there, however, she became very angry and started shouting at the padishah, "Look at this! Did you see what your friend did? You are a padishah! Why should you be the friend of a fox? He was only an animal, but see what a big mess he made while dying!"

"Oh, Wife, do not say that. I owe him for everything I have. He made me padishah; he made me rich; he had me married to you."

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But his wife did not listen to what he was saying. "No, no! Put his body into this sack and throw it into the river. Hurry! Hurry!"

"Oh, no, Wife," answered the padishah. "We should have a very fine funeral service for him!"

"No!" said the wife again.

Finally, the padishah decided to do what his wife demanded. He placed the fox's body in a sack and took the sack to the bank of the river. But just as he was about to throw it into the water, the fox jumped out and said, "No, no, my padishah! Now I shall begin a war against you!"

The padishah begged him not to do this. He said, "Please do not do such a thing to me! Forgive me! I should not have listened to my wife. It was not my fault!"